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### Lake Merritt — For Transients Only

The month of November has been a dark period for the larger birds of the San Francisco Bay region. In San Francisco's Union Square one afternoon pigeons by the score flocked around a trusted soul who was handing out grain most bountifully. In a short time dying pigeons fell to the ground and the trusted soul disappeared, leaving no trace behind. About two weeks later ducks and swans on the pond at the Palace of Fine Arts were found dead from poisoned food. Although a reward has been offered for information leading to the capture of this "crackpot", the villain is still at large. These two incidents were reported in the newspapers and the populace has been eagerly on the lookout to catch the despicable person who enjoys the birds in this sadistic manner. But this did not end the troubles of the birds. Metropolitan Oakland's Lake Merritt Bird Sanctuary made headlines.

Lake Merritt is a gleaming jewel in the heart of the business district of an ordinary run-of-the-mill city. To see Lake Merritt at sunset is a breathtakingly beautiful experience, dark buildings forming a picturesque skyline, wild birds flying overhead and dropping to the golden water. The people of Oakland value their treasure. Occasionally, through the years, a city administration agitates for economy, thinking to appeal to the voting tax-payers by publicizing the fact that to feed the thousands of birds that come annually to the lake and which live there permanently is costing too much, and therefore the amount of food will be reduced or perhaps not provided at all. Immediately the people are up in arms. They want the birds fed, war or no war. They haven't gasoline to go to the country. The country comes to them. It comes with the swish of the wings of the birds that seek its sanctuary. They visit the lake often and teach their children the pleasure of watching the wildlife at close range. They demand that the city continue to provide grain for their valued visitors, and they make it plain that they will not tolerate this kind of economy.

The easy way of life appeals to birds as well as to humans. The park authorities claim that about three hundred mallards have decided to become permanent guests of the City of Oakland. They object. They want transients only. Perhaps they borrowed the idea from the city's hotels, which have ruled that guests can stay five days, then out into the street they go. Written notices and verbal admonitions to move on would, of course, have no effect upon the species mallard. They like the four o'clock dinner, the extra tidbits from the children, the convenient and safe nesting site on the small island some distance from the shore. So, at Lake Merritt they have remained, and even multiplied.

The park employees complained to the park officials that the duck population had become forbiddingly and expensively large. They declared that something

should be done about the situation, since they could not stop feeding their inconsiderate and no-longer-welcome guests. It was determined that the mallards who had been in residence for three years (as shown by their bands) were no longer wild birds under the protection of the Fish and Game Commission, but fell under the classification of tame birds, under the jurisdiction of the city only. The park personnel took it into their hands to reduce the mallard population in their own way. They decided to give a mallard dinner for park employees. The waddling fat mallards were lured into the traps used for catching birds for banding purposes, and then twelve of them were put into bags and carted away. Unfortunately for their plan, the trappers were observed by two Oakland citizens, who were typical self-appointed guardian's of Lake Merritt and its birds. They followed the men and the bags to their destination and reported the action to the police department. No publicity was given the matter until after the ducks had been killed, the tell-tale feathers, heads and feet buried, and the dinner enjoyed by the park employees. Then the story broke out in the newspapers. The reporters had a glorious time. It is so much fun to catch people sinning, and makes such delightful reading.

Even the war took second place in local conversation. What do you think of the city officials permitting our ducks to be killed? Imagine, eating our mallards! What right have park employees to do that? Those ducks were in our sanctuary! For all we know, they might kill our gorgeous Wood Ducks to make flies for fishing! It must be stopped! Why doesn't the Fish and Game Commission do something?

A good time was had by all — perhaps not as good a time gastronomically as those who partook of the mallard feast — but it was fun to enjoy a "holier-than-thou" holiday as only private citizens in a freedom-of-speech democracy can. The Fish and Game Commission made the firm statement that the mallards were definitely of the tame variety. (They said they could tell by the size of the bills of the dug-up evidence; they could have told by the corns on the feet if they had found the feet!) Responsibility was finally put upon the Park Board. The park foreman was given the equivalent of a two hundred dollar fine. The employees who trapped the ducks were ordered to replace them with tame mallards from a farm. These were released on the lake, and the episode was closed as far as the city, the state and the federal government were concerned.

The irate citizens of Oakland seem fairly well satisfied with the outcome. They hope that the city authorities have learned that while they may appear to be chiefly concerned with what should be done about General Patton, juvenile delinquency, and inflation, they have one eye open for what goes on at Lake Merritt. If it ever becomes a sanctuary for transients only, they want to have something to say about how it is accomplished.

—Laurel Reynolds, Piedmont, California



### Nature Books for Children

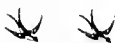
There are several fine books available this year which should do much toward stimulating children to an interest in nature in general and birds in particular.

"Animal Travels", by Bertha Morris Parker and Thomas Park, both of the University of Chicago, cannot be too highly recommended. It is beautifully illustrated in color by Olive Earle. While the title is broad to include the stories of a few migrating animals and fish, the book is largely devoted to the migrations of

birds, beginning with the Artic Tern. It is published by Harper & Brothers, and the price is \$1.00.

"The Tale of the Crow" by Henry B. Kane is a fascinating book, both as to its superb photographic illustrations and its well-told story. It is one of the series of Wild World Tales, which includes "The Tale of the Whitefoot Mouse", "The Tale of the Bullfrog", and "The Tale of the Promethea Moth". The price is \$1.50, the publisher Alfred A. Knopf.

"Let's Go to the Seashore" by Harriet E. Huntington would arouse in very young children an interest in the wonders of the seashore. It is a series of photographs with a brief and simply-written text. Mrs. Huntington made the book for her own children and has been able to share it with the children of the world. The photographs were taken near Santa Monica. It is \$2.00, and Doubleday, Doran & Co. are the publishers.



### November Field Trip

The thirteen bird enthusiasts, who took part in the trip to the East Bay Regional Park on Sunday, November 14th, were unanimous in their praise of the weather, the terrain and the birds that were identified. Under the capable leadership of Mr. Donald Brock, an attempt was made to study bird calls and observe the behavior of some of the less common species. Too much emphasis should not be placed upon the number of different varieties noted; it is very important that we learn something about each species as well. Those present included: Mr. and Mrs. Kilham, Mrs. Bozant, Misses Elwonger, MacIver, Stanton, Young, Messrs. Brock, Fischer and four visitors.

The list for the day follows:

Red-tailed Hawk	Wren-tit	Brewer's Blackbird
California Quail	Winter Wren	California Purple Finch
Anna's Hummingbird	Robin	Pine Siskin
Red-shafted Flicker	Varied Thrush	Spotted Towhee
California Jay	Hermit Thrush	Brown Towhee
Steller's Jay	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Junco
Plain Titmouse	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Bush-tit	Hutton's Vireo	Fox Sparrow
Slender-billed Nuthatch	Audubon's Warbler	Song Sparrow
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Townsend's Warbler	

—Ivander MacIver, Historian



### Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

The following observations have been reported:

19 White Pelicans, Nov. 11, Lake Merritt, Mrs. Harold C. Austin.

Snowy Egret, Sept. 11, Canvas-back and Buffle-head Ducks, Nov. 5, Lake Merritt; Ring-necked Ducks, Nov. 7, Canvas-backs and a pair of Redheads, Nov. 11, Lake Temescal, Oakland. Herman V. Leffler.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Nov. 17. Alameda, Junea W. Kelly.



Audubon Notes

DECEMBER MEETING: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco. (Note the hour.)

Mrs. Junea W. Kelly, one of the leading naturalists of the West Coast, will speak on "Bird Migration". Members may bring guests.

DECEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, December 12th, to Lake Merritt in Oakland. We will make our annual census of the water and land birds of the area. Members and friends will meet at the Duck Feeding Station at 10 a.m. San Francisco members will take the "B" train at San Francisco Terminal at 9:32 a.m. and get off at Perkins and Grand Avenue. East Bay members take No. 12 or No. 18 car going out Grand Avenue. Groups with leaders will form at the Feeding Station. Bring luncheon.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: The annual bird count will take place on the 19th of December, the Sunday following the regular trip. Will those members who have not already signed up to take part in this annual event kindly get in touch with Mrs. Harold C. Aus-

tin, 541 Boulevard Way, Piedmont, California.

NOVEMBER MEETING: The 314th meeting was held on the 11th in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, President Mrs. Harold C. Austin presiding. Mr. Frank A. Pitelka of the Zoology Department of the University of California gave an instructive and interesting lecture on "Bird Nests of the San Francisco Bay Region". Mr. Pitelka's talk was well illustrated by slides showing the various types of nests, beginning with the most primitive on the ground and carrying through to the beautifully woven ones of the oriole. Mr. Pitelka also described methods of locating nests, stressing the facts that familiarity with a bird's habits is a great help.

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES IN WEST POINT CLUB: The Association, by vote of the Board of Directors at the October meeting, purchased two memberships in the West Point Club. This Club was formed by members of the Sierra Club to save West Point Inn, Mt. Tamalpais, from abandonment during the war. Our society, or any of its members, may use this club house for group field trips on occasion and when planned in advance.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Mrs. Harold C. Austin.....	541 Boulevard Way, Piedmont 10
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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 p.m.

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.